

L E T T E R

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A D V I C E

TO THE

*Ireland - Parliament*

I—*st* MEMBERS.

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LETTER

OF

ADVICE

TO THE

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*Friends and Countrymen,*

**T**HE Parliament having met this Winter, it cannot be improper to address the Members, at this Time, in a pathetick Manner ; exciting them to pay a strict Obedience to his Majesty's Commands ; exhorting them to a diligent Attendance on their Duty ; and endeavouring to urge them, by all virtuous Motives, to be careful of the great Trust that is reposed in them.

A Member of Parliament is, without all doubt, a Man of as much Consequence as any Subject in the Kingdom. He is placed in the highest Station, which his Country has in its Disposal, and invested with the greatest Trust the People can possibly bestow upon him. He has the Properties, the Liberties, nay, the very Lives of those, who chose him, in his Hands ; and what is more, he is accountable to no Man for what he does. Thus invested with almost absolute Power, how circumspect, how cautious should he be, of acting in any Manner unworthy of this great Trust ; a Trust, which is by much the more sacred, because those, who ave it, have divested themselves of the Power of cging him to Ac-



count for any Neglect, or Non-performance of his Duty in it.

Every Member, therefore, lies under an indispensible Obligation of attending diligently in his Post. He must be ready, at all Times, to maintain the Rights, preserve the Freedom, and advance the Interest of those who chose him; of the House of which he is a Member; and of his Country in general; and postpone all Considerations whatever for the publick Benefit.

In this great Council of the Nation, every Man stands upon an equal Foot; and no Member is more considerable, or greater, than another, but as he distinguishes himself by his Abilities, or Endeavours, to serve his King and Country.

It is Matter of Astonishment to me, that, with all these Advantages and Opportunities of doing good to themselves, and their Country, every Member does not exert himself to the utmost; and yet such Diffidence there hath been in some, and so much Indolence in others, that few have endeavour'd to put themselves forward in the Cause of their Country; and many have intirely neglected it, by absenting themselves some times for a whole Session together.

I have known some, in former Parliaments, (may it never be the Case again) who, when once they were chosen Members, never thought of giving themselves the Trouble of coming up to attend their Duty in the House; and, provided they had the Privilege of franking Letters, they were not under the least Concern what became of the Publick.

With all such as are thus criminally indolent, I would expostulate in the following Manner. Do you, I would ask every Gentleman, seek being a Member of Parliament as an Advantage, or do you undertake it as an honourable Burthen? What it formerly was, when Corruption was unknown, is manifest from the Wages which were always allow'd the Members.

Do you mean your own personal Good, or do you hope to become serviceable to the Publick? Every Man, who is not entirely abandon'd in his Principles, will readily answer me, that he scorns all private Views, and hath the Interest of his Country only at Heart. Why then do you not attend where your Duty calls you; where

where you may be of Service, and where the great Affairs of your Country call you, and are transacted? Consider what important Matters may, very probably, be, this Session, the Subject of your Deliberations.

But there is one Thing, I am sure, above all, necessary, and that is, The making some good and effectual Laws for restraining of Luxury; which, if not speedily prevented, must infallibly ruin this Kingdom. It is now spread amongst all Degrees of People. It is not only the Man of Quality, the Gentleman, and the Merchant that is infected; but, from the Example of their Superiors, Luxury is now got even behind Counters, among Shop-keepers, and their Apprentices.

I am very apprehensive (if we could be truly inform'd) that this prevailing Vice has brought the Ballance of Trade, upon the Whole, to be against us. What a miserable Condition must we be then in, when Trade, which should be our Support, becomes an Instrument of our Destruction? The Ballance of it, we all know, must be answered in Bullion.

When these are the Topicks, which you may, probably, enter upon; when Points of this Consequence may, perhaps, come before you; can you have so little publick Spirit in you, as to hesitate one Moment, whether you shall come up to Town this Winter, or not? You can have no just or lawful Excuse, but Want of Health. Your Affairs, and every one that belongs to you, are, by the Privilege of the House, safely secured. How then can you look your Countrymen, and those who have chosen you, in the Face, when a Point of Consequence may be lost, perhaps, for Want of your single Vote? Sure, if you do not attend your Duty in Parliament, you must hide yourself in some obscure Corner. To shew yourself in one Place, when every body knows your Duty calls you to another, is highly scandalous; and, if you live, where you are chosen, you are daily insulting your Electors, by shewing them how much you neglect and despise their Service.

If Affairs should ever be conducted in Parliament in such a Manner as to turn to the Detriment of your Country, have you not Reason to be ashamed that you did not do whatever lay in your Power to prevent it? Should they be well administer'd, for the Honour and Advantage

Advantage of the Kingdom ; are you not sensibly grieved that you, who ought to have been concern'd in it, can claim no Share of the Reputation of it ? Is there any Thing more infamous, even in private Life, than to accept a Trust, promising to be careful in it, and afterwards never to do any one single Act in Execution of it ? You are like an Officer, soliciting for Preferment, and when any Danger appears, or his Country wants his Service, basely quits his Colours, and deserts from his Duty.

What shall I say to rouse, and animate you, in your Country's Cause ? How shall I warm you, with a right Spirit, and a becoming Zeal ? If your own Safety, your own Property, your own Prosperity, will not affect you, is the Welfare and Happiness of Millions of no Moment to you ?

When Points of the greatest Consequence to your Country, may possibly come under your Deliberation, can you then be framing mean and poor Excuses against a Call of the House, when it shall be ordered ? And at the same Time be deaf to the Calls of Honour, and of your Country. If you will not through vile Indolence, having no better Reason, be active, and diligent yourself, in your Country's Cause, why do you not, if you have the sole Interest in your Corporation, bring in some other Person of a less truant Disposition, who might be desirous and willing to exert himself with more Vigour ? Consider that you do a double Mischief : You, who have the Power of doing Good, from Indolence want the Inclination ; and, at the same Time, those, who might have the Inclination, are, by you, prevented from having the Power of doing it. The Body of the Senate, like the natural Body, is never perfect for Action, when deprived of any of its Members ; and yet capable of acting, though it wants, perhaps, a Finger, an Arm, or two or three Limbs.

If a Man did but seriously consider, what honest Comforts there are, in assiduously attending his Duty in the House, he would want no lucrative Incitements to engage him to it. What a Satisfaction must it be to a virtuous Mind, to think that he hath it in his Power to do Good to Ten Thousands at one Time ; what an exquisite Pleasure must it afford, to think of releasing from Misery,  
and



and the cruellest Confinement, Numbers of indigent and unfortunate Persons, by a general Act for the Relief of insolvent Debtors!

But let us turn the Tables, and put it in the worst Light. I will suppose, that you are of a different Principle from the Party that prevails in the House; and that you see no Probability, or Prospect of carrying any Question agreeable to your Opinion. This, you say, discourages you from giving your Attendance; but will this absolve you from your Duty, and the Ties of Honour and Conscience? Will this release you from the Obligations you are under to those who chose you; or to those who are desirous of acting with you? May you not, by diligent, and constant Attendance, have a Chance of now and then carrying a Point? May you not, by Accident, and the Non-Attendance of others, have an Opportunity of serving a Friend in a just Cause, or in an Election, if you can suppose that Interest, or Faction, might otherwise make him suffer.

Let us suppose it possible, that a few Gentlemen, zealously concerned for the Preservation of the Constitution, and the Welfare of their Country, should labour with indefatigable Pains, and Industry, through many tedious Days of a long Session, without Effect, and to no Purpose; every thing being by the Force of Party-Prejudice, or some stronger Influence, carried against them. This, no doubt, is extremely disheartning; but if, at Length, by their unwearied Attendance, and a strict Secrecy, they should be able to carry a Bill to prevent such Mischiefs for the future, what Transports must they feel? what Joy must fill their Hearts? Would not such an Incident make them ample Amends for all their Fatigues? would not this be a full Reward for all their Care and Pains?

I have known in former Parliaments, some of the rural Esquires, the oddest and most unaccountable Creatures breathing. They will sit at home, or in their Country Coffee-houses, railing at Courtiers, complaining of the Times, and, in short, upbraiding the Government, and the general Administration of publick Affairs in all its Parts; and yet they would not stir one Step, nor say one Syllable (nothing but a Monosyllable being  
expected

expected from them) to remedy any of the Mischiefs they so loudly complain'd of; nor will they give their Attendance, to help and assist others, that would attempt it.

This brings to my Mind, a Story I have formerly heard of Two Highwaymen, who attack'd a Stage-Coach, in which there was an Officer, two Justices of the Peace, and a Clergyman. When the Rogues came up to the Coach, the Officer leaped out, and put himself upon his Defence, the rest of the Company sat still, and whilst the Officer was bravely defending himself, the rest were the whole Time scolding bitterly, and calling all Sorts of Names; they cry'd 'twas a Shame such lusty Fellows, who might get an honest Livelihood by Work, should turn Highwaymen, and plunder his Majesty's liege Subjects; if they had Courage, why did they not go into the Army, and serve where their Courage might be of Use? In short, the Justices told them they would come to be hang'd, and the Parson assured them they would certainly be damn'd. The Officer having fired both his Pistols, was, at length, overpowered; upon which he reproached his Fellow-Travellers, for their Cowardice, telling them, if they had assisted him, whilst he was fighting, instead of sitting still, and, like old Women, calling Names only, they might have perhaps taken the Rogues; or, at least, have prevented the Robbery. The Moral of this is, if Gentlemen would constantly attend their Duty, and be a little active, many Things might be prevented, which it is in vain to sit still, and grumble at only.

Such Members as never appear in the House, but upon a Call, are like Soldiers, who are list'd only to make their Appearance, upon a Muster; and may properly enough be distinguish'd by the military Cant Name of a FAGGOT: If these Faggots of the House, are to be shamed into a Sense of their Duty, by having a Name of Reproach fixed upon them, it will be well; but if not, I hope, in all ensuing Elections, every County, Corporation, and Borough, in *I—d*, will consider, whether it can possibly be for their Interest, or their Honour, to be represented by a FAGGOT.





